

Garden Line - Who Gardens in July in Houston?

by Brent Moon - HPARD Urban Garden Manager

Gardening fiends, that's who! For those of us who truly love gardening, July is still a fine time. But be smart about it: garden early or late in the day, and drink lots of water.



Plants such as peppers, okra, eggplant, tomatillos, and melons should really be hitting their stride about now. Keep them well-watered to keep them productive, and water early or late so that as little evaporates as possible before their roots can take it up.

Also, try to water at ground level and avoid getting water on the leaves. Wetting the foliage contributes to foliar diseases such as leaf spot and powdery mildew. An occasional spray to blast off aphids or spider mites is OK.





If you are planning to have a fall tomato crop, this is the time to get your transplants. Get them in the ground no later than the last week of July, but the extreme summer sun calls for extra protection that you didn't have to give your spring transplants.

Take care to shade your new tomatoes either by erecting a shade cloth over them for a few weeks or cover them with a board set up on concrete blocks or pots. This is the method touted by Dr. Bob Randall, co-founder of Urban Harvest, and if he says it works, hey, it works! Keep your plants mulched, well-watered, and fertilized, and you should have a nice crop of fall tomatoes.



If your lawn seems yellow, mid-summer is a good time to put a light application of fertilizer on your turf. If you use one of the organic granular fertilizers, you should see a nice green up without having to worry about burning your grass by over-application. That's one of the many benefits of using organics, not to mention that they are easier on the environment and most synthetic fertilizers are way too high in N-P-K.



Be sure to water your shrubs and trees deeply this time of year. As stated before, the best time to water is early or late in the day. A good deep watering once a month should be sufficient if we have not had much rain lately.

